

OAHU RAILWAY & LAND COMPANY TERMINAL  
355 King Street  
Honolulu  
Honolulu County  
Hawaii

HABS No. HI-573

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
333 Bush Street  
San Francisco, CA 94104

# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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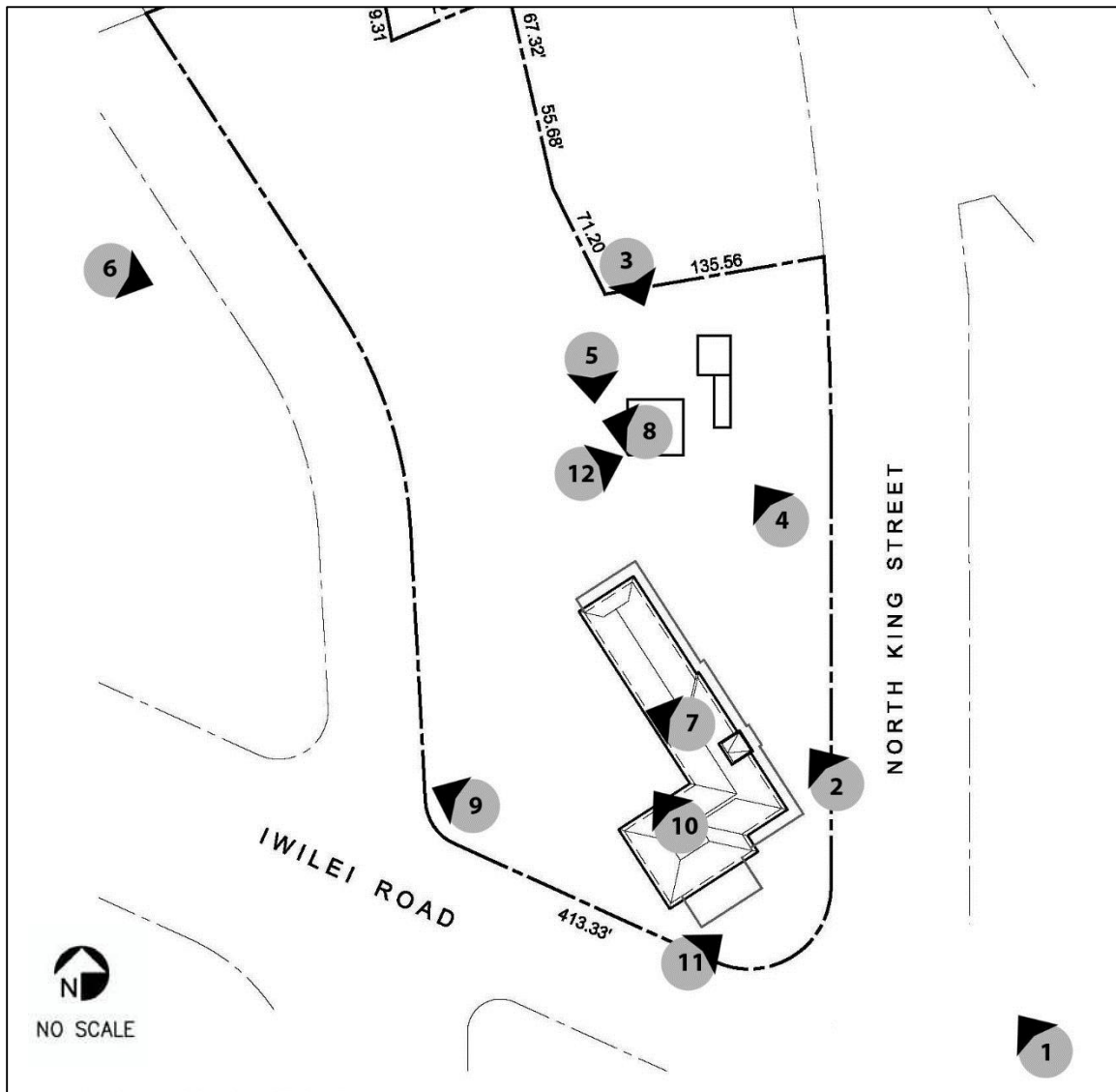
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Photographs 1, 2, 7, Silverhouse Photographic, Athens, GA, August 2012  
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Photo Key



**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY**  
**OAHU RAILWAY & LAND COMPANY TERMINAL**

**HABS No. HI-573**

**Location:** 333-355 North King Street  
City and County of Honolulu, Hawaii.

UTM Coordinates (NAD83)  
617707. 2357472  
617783. 2357441  
617780. 2357578  
617717. 2357565

**Present Owner:** State of Hawaii

**Occupant:** State of Hawaii, Department of Human Services, King  
Kamehameha Celebration Commission (Depot); Kalihi-Palama  
Culture & Arts Society (OR&L Land Department Office and  
Document Storage Building).

**Present Use:** The OR&L Depot now accommodates offices for the Department  
of Human Services and the King Kamehameha Celebration  
Commission. The OR&L Land Department Office and Document  
Storage Building houses the offices of the Kalihi-Palama Culture &  
Arts Society.

**Significance:** The Oahu Railway & Land Co. (OR&L) Terminal is significant for  
its association with OR&L, which developed Oahu's rail system,  
providing transportation for the sugar and pineapple plantations,  
the military, as well as residents of Oahu, and spurred  
development across the island. The OR&L Land Department  
Office and Document Storage Building is significant for its  
Classical Revival style, while the OR&L Depot is significant as an  
example of the Mediterranean Revival Style that distinctly marked  
Territorial architecture of its period.

**Historian(s):** Lesleigh Jones  
Mason Architects, Inc.  
119 Merchant Street, Suite 501  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
Completed January, 2016

**Project Information:** This report is part of the documentation for properties identified as  
incurring an adverse effect by the Honolulu Rail Transit Project  
(H RTP) in the City and County of Honolulu. This documentation  
was required under Stipulation V.C. (1, 2) of the Honolulu High-  
Capacity Transit Corridor Project (HHCTCP) Programmatic  
Agreement (PA), which was signed by the U.S. Department of

Transportation's Federal Transit Administration, the Hawaii State Historic Preservation Officer, the United States Navy, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. After consultation with the City and County of Honolulu, the National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, in a letter dated June 29, 2011, specified the details of the required documentation efforts, including HABS documentation for this and other properties affected by the H RTP. The field work was conducted in December 2015 and the initial report prepared in January 2016.

## Part I. Historical Information

### A. Physical History

**1. Date of erection:** The property was first developed in 1889, with railroad tracks and a wooden, Queen Anne Style terminal building within the boundaries of the Kuwili Fishpond. The OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building was built in 1914, the existing OR&L Depot was constructed and replaced the 1889 terminal in 1925, and the Filling Station was built in 1940.

**2. Architect:** The OR&L Depot was designed by Guy Nelson Rothwell, a well-known local architect and structural engineer. Rothwell was born in Hawaii, and graduated from the University of Washington with a degree in architectural engineering. He served in the Navy's Construction Corps during World War I, then returned to Hawaii to work as an engineer for construction contractors. He opened his own firm in 1923, and during the 1920s and 30s was responsible for projects including Griffiths and J.B. Castle Halls at Punahou School, All Saints Episcopal Church in Kapaa, Kauai, Roosevelt High School in Honolulu. He also was a consulting engineer for the City & County of Honolulu on the King Street, Moanalua, Haleiwa, and Wahiawa bridges, as well as the Honolulu Stadium. As a member of a consortium of architects, Rothwell worked on the design of Honolulu Hale (City Hall). During World War II, Rothwell's firm, along with C.W. Dickey's, were the only two architecture firms in the islands that continued working through the war, occupied with various Navy, military and government projects.<sup>1</sup> In the 1950s and 60s, the firm grew, becoming first Rothwell & Lester, Architects, then Rothwell, Lester and Phillips Ltd. During this time, the firm was responsible for the design of Kaimuki High School, and the Waialae Shopping Center (later named Kahala Mall), and Chapel of the Mystical Rose at Chaminade University. Guy Rothwell retired in 1967.<sup>2</sup>

The architects are unknown for the 1914 OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building and the 1940 Filling Station.

**3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses:** The parcel on which the OR&L Terminal is sited was originally held by the OR&L Co. through an 1889 grant from King David Kalakaua. OR&L Co. was owned by the Dillingham family, first Benjamin Franklin Dillingham, and then his sons Walter and Harold. OR&L's Terminal grew with the acquisition of neighboring parcels, to its widest extent as shown on a 1941 map. This map shows the area filled with buildings used for offices and maintenance operations, in addition to four lines of passenger track, as well as numerous other cargo and maintenance tracks. OR&L occupied the entire property until 1947. The OR&L Terminal has since been significantly reduced in size, and has changed ownership.

During OR&L's ownership of the OR&L Terminal, the ground floor of the Depot was used as a passenger station while the second floor was allocated to the

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<sup>1</sup> No author, Oral Histories of 1930s Architects (Hawaii Society/American Institute of Architects: Honolulu) 1982. p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Lesleigh Jones. Draft National Register Nomination Forms, Oahu Railway & Land Co. Office & Document Storage Building and Oahu Railway & Land Co. Terminal Building, both dated December, 2013.

company's railroad management offices. The OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building contained offices for OR&L's land holdings division.

After railway operations ended in 1947, the property was used by OR&L Co. as a bus depot, and base for the transfer and storage of cargo. The OR&L Depot continued to be used for passengers and offices.

Beginning in the early 1950s, the OR&L Co. entered into a lengthy legal battle against the Territory of Hawaii over control of the terminal property. The fight continued into the Statehood era, against the State of Hawaii. At issue was the fact that the property had originally been granted to Benjamin F. Dillingham by the Kingdom of Hawaii with the condition that it be used for railroad purposes. The State argued that with the demise of the railway in 1947, OR&L Co. was no longer meeting its part of the agreement, and the land should revert back to the State as the inheritor of all crown lands after the overthrow of the monarchy in 1893. In the end, OR&L Co. lost, and in 1961, ceded possession of the 5 ½ acre Depot site to the State of Hawaii.

OR&L Co. retained the right to lease the property for eighteen months after the agreement, and during that time, the track on the property was removed. After OR&L Co. vacated the property, it no longer served as a bus terminal, and was used instead for state offices. Various state organizations have used the offices since that time.

The property was further reduced in size in 2007 when the State agreed to lease 1.825 acres of the 5.5 acres it received from OR&L. The current OR&L Terminal is approximately 3.675 acres in area.

**4. Builder, contractor, suppliers:** The OR&L Depot was constructed by the Hawaiian Contracting Company, another Dillingham family-owned company, in collaboration with OR&L Co.'s own in-house crew. The builders of the OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building and Filling Station are unknown, but were likely Dillingham companies, if not an OR&L Co. crew.

**5. Original plans and construction:** Original drawings were not found for any of the buildings or the site. However, one early rendering of the OR&L Depot was found that was published in the *Paradise of the Pacific* in December, 1924. This rendering is attributed to Rothwell, and shows the building much as it appears currently. The exceptions are the clock tower, which appears taller with a hipped roof, rather than the crenellations which were ultimately used instead. Further, the porte-cochere is not included in the rendering. The image also appears to indicate plans to change the roof of the OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building to match the new Depot's roof shape and material.

Additionally, in 1975, the State of Hawaii DAGS produced construction drawings to modify the OR&L Depot for the "Kalihi/Palama Multi-Service Community Center." This drawing set included a demolition plan, which indicated the layout of the OR&L Depot at that time. The Hawaiian Railway Society traced and further annotated these drawings in an effort to document the Depot's historic appearance. The Hawaiian Railway Society's drawings include floor plans, elevations, sections and window types.



**6. Alterations and additions:** When Benjamin F. Dillingham acquired the Iwilei property for the OR&L Co., the land was primarily comprised of a large fishpond, Loko Kuwili. Accordingly, Dillingham had the incoming railroad tracks constructed atop built-up berms, and the original wood-frame terminal building was constructed in 1889 on piers to keep it elevated above the water line.

After this initial building campaign, Dillingham filled Loko Kuwili to create more usable land area. A majority, if not all, of the fill for the Iwilei property came from Dillingham's work at Moanalua Gardens, transported by his trains. Once this work was complete, the railroad company was able to build additional maintenance and storage buildings on the property. The OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building was added to the property in 1914.

In 1925, the original Queen Anne style wood-frame terminal building was replaced with the extant Mediterranean Style OR&L Depot. At an unknown date, its northeast end (beyond the arcade) was extended, nearly doubling the length of the building. In 1940, a filling station was added to the property.

A 1941 map shows that the property had reached nearly full density. By this time, the area had been transformed into a tightly concentrated industrial site, with numerous OR&L Co. facilities which, in addition to the buildings still extant today, included a network of rail lines, a roundhouse with machine shop, blacksmith and car shop, freight shed and freight house, stalls for rail cars and trucks and trailers, coach shed, truck scale, paint shop, trucking warehouse, and others.

In 1947, rail operations ceased, and the passenger tracks were removed. In the 1950s, a number of the buildings in the surrounding area that were associated with railroad maintenance, such as the roundhouse, were removed, as well as the associated tracks, and new commercial buildings were added to the portion of the parcel that OR&L Co. retained after the 1961 division of the property.

The OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building and the filling station remain relatively unchanged since their construction. However, the OR&L Depot was altered in 1975 to accommodate new occupants. The changes involved the removal of some interior walls, expansion of the interior into the outset arcade on the northern part of the building, relocation of first floor windows, infilling a number of open archways, and creating new openings. Additionally, the second floor skylight was painted over, one of three concrete train bumpers was removed, and a shelter attached to the building's southwest side was removed. An elevator was also added to the exterior of the building at an unknown date.

## **B. Historical Context**

**1. Property and Company Development:** The Oahu Railway & Land Co. Terminal is closely associated with the development of Oahu's rail system, which provided transportation for the sugar and pineapple plantations, the military, and residents of Oahu, and spurred development across the island.

The OR&L Co. was formed by Benjamin Franklin Dillingham (1844-1918). A sailor, he arrived in Honolulu in 1865, and after breaking his leg while on shore leave there, remained in port to recuperate. He found work at a hardware store and in 1869 was able to purchase it as his first business enterprise. For this venture he partnered with Alfred Castle, the son of Samuel Northrup Castle, a founder of Castle & Cooke, which was a large mercantile firm in Honolulu.

Dillingham possessed an active entrepreneurial spirit and in the following years he saw the potential for the development of sugar plantations on Oahu. He courted investors with a plan to obtain 41,000 acres from James Campbell on the Ewa plain, and 15,000 acres in Kahuku. Dillingham realized that investment in land in the outlying areas of Oahu could be profitable under two conditions; first, there would need to be transportation to and from those areas, and second, a reliable source of water was required in order to make use of the land.

Dillingham was unable to come to a purchase agreement with Campbell, primarily because the discovery of artesian water beneath the Ewa lands raised their value in Campbell's eyes. However, in 1879, Dillingham obtained a lease from Campbell on the acreage, at \$50,000 a year for 50 years. Dillingham now had land with a source of water to develop what would become Ewa Plantation. All he was missing was the transportation infrastructure.

At the time of the lease, Hawaii's monarch, King David Kalakaua, was advocating for the construction of rail systems for Oahu and the neighbor islands, which he initiated at the beginning of his reign in 1874. In 1878, he signed "An Act to Promote the Construction of Rail-ways,"<sup>3</sup> and the kingdom built Oahu's first train system in 1882 to transport materials from Moiliili Quarry to the docks.<sup>4</sup> Other, larger rail ventures were started on the outer islands even earlier. They included the Kahului Railroad on Maui, the Hawaiian Railroad company on the island of Hawaii, and the Kilauea Plantation, on Kauai.

In 1888, Dillingham obtained a franchise from Kalakaua and the Hawaiian legislature for a railway and land development company, to begin construction of a common carrier rail route on Oahu. Titled an "Act of the Hawaiian Legislature," the franchise legislation was promulgated on September 11, 1888, and the OR&L Co. was chartered on February 4, 1889. The charter had originally been awarded to Dillingham personally, however he transferred the charter to OR&L Co., which he created to develop the railway. Rather than serving on the board of OR&L Co., Dillingham acted instead as the general contractor for, and later general manager of the corporation. Dillingham hired a civil engineer and land surveyor, Charles H. Kleugel as the company's chief engineer, who planned the alignment of the tracks. Kleugel in turn hired George Denison to oversee the company's laborers, who were mainly Chinese.<sup>5</sup> Denison remained with OR&L for the majority of its existence.

Construction began on March 8, 1889 with groundbreaking at Moanalua, on an OR&L narrow gauge steam railway between Honolulu and the Pearl River

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<sup>3</sup> Jim Chiddix and MacKinnon Simpson, *Next Stop Honolulu! The Story of the Oahu Railway & Land Company 1889-1971* (Honolulu, HI: Sugar Cane Press) 2004. p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 158.

<sup>5</sup> Jim Chiddix and MacKinnon Simpson, *Next Stop Honolulu! The Story of the Oahu Railway & Land Company 1889-1971* (Honolulu, HI: Sugar Cane Press) 2004. p. 17.

Lagoon (later Pearl Harbor). The work began in Moanalua, as cuts to the hills in the area, as well as the creation of Moanalua Gardens for the Damon family would provide fill material for the parts of the line (particularly the Terminal area) that were below water. Most of the initial work was done by manual labor, using “saws and axes to clear the land, shovels and picks to level it.”<sup>6 7</sup> This meant that only minimal fill was done during this time. Dillingham had ordered a steam shovel to expedite work, but it did not arrive on the island until November 1889, at which time more extensive fill work could be accomplished.

By September 4, 1889 (Dillingham’s 45<sup>th</sup> birthday), several miles of track were complete, and Dillingham organized a special demonstration of his new railroad for invited guests. The OR&L’s first locomotive engineer, George Kent, along with Kleugel helmed the locomotive *Kauila*, only at the last minute acquired from the monarchy, on the railroad’s first outing, which, according to reports lasted approximately 1/3 of a mile.

On November 16, 1889, the King’s birthday, the initial section of track between Iwilei and Halawa was complete, and the railway opened to the public with free rides. Also completed by this date was the first OR&L terminal building. Sited in the swampy Iwilei area of Loko Kuwili, this 1889 wood building was raised on wood piles to elevate it above the level of the pond. The tracks were constructed along a berm, which ensured they were never below water. The only nearby building was the city prison, which was located on higher ground at what is now the intersection of Iwilei Road and Kuwili Street. Later work filled the pond completely, and allowed construction of additional buildings and tracks in the Iwilei area.

In December 1889 Dillingham sub-leased his Ewa lands to Castle & Cooke, and his Kahuku lands to James B. Castle and Lorrin Thurston, who developed sugar plantations in advance of the railroad. Ewa Plantation was formally organized in January, 1890. Dillingham also encouraged the acquisition of the Halstead’s sugar plantation in Waialua by Castle & Cooke, which was accomplished through a newly formed subsidiary, Waialua Agricultural Company. Furthermore, he fostered the development of the Oahu Sugar Company in Aiea, by securing a place for himself on its board of directors along with other prominent local businessmen.<sup>8</sup>

It would take about two years for Ewa Plantation’s first crop to be grown, harvested, and processed. In the interim, with the railroad’s initial section to Ewa complete, Dillingham searched for riders or freight to provide an income for the railroad until the sugar plantation could begin the shipping that would turn profits. To achieve this, OR&L Co. promoted picnics and excursions to the Pearl Harbor area, and rented out passenger cars for private functions. The company also saw the potential for real estate projects along the line and became involved in

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. pg. 18.

<sup>7</sup> In the early years of the railroad, experienced engineers had to be hired from lines in the United States, while later engineers could be trained at OR&L. Other employees who performed manual labor in constructing the tracks and setting up locomotives and cars, as well as performing maintenance could be hired from the local workforce, who were experienced in construction and other trades.

<sup>8</sup> Don Hibbard, *Oahu Railway & Land Company Trestle Ruins HAER HI-91*, (National Park Service.) August 2009. pp. 3-4.

land ventures, including the development of housing in Pearl City and the Town of Manana. OR&L Co. also opened a cemetery called Loch View along the line in Pearl City, and added rolling stock of funeral cars to carry corpses and mourners.

Ewa Plantation processed its first crop in 1892. It boasted annually increasing yields, and OR&L Co. hauled the processed sugar to Honolulu. The two entities began to operate as Dillingham had envisioned, with each dependent upon the other for economic benefit.

From the overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy (1893) and the creation of the Republic of Hawaii (1894), until the finalization of annexation and the creation of the U.S. Territory of Hawaii (1900), Dillingham had his business interests firmly involved with fellow pro-annexation American businessmen. He had partnered with Lorrin A. Thurston, a key figure in the overthrow of the Monarchy, in the 1892 establishment of the Hawaiian Bureau of Information, a venture intended to promote both Thurston and Dillingham's businesses. Probably due to the rail franchise granted to him by Kalakaua (1836-1891), Dillingham left Hawaii in March 1892, avoiding direct participation in the overthrow itself. This gave him the appearance of impartiality.<sup>9</sup> Once the overthrow occurred, Dillingham returned to Hawaii in May 1893, and supported annexation, along with his fellow Americans.<sup>10</sup>

By 1895, OR&L Co. was turning a small profit, and the rail line had been extended to Waianae, where it served the Waianae Sugar Company. As OR&L Co. had done previously, Dillingham promoted excursions to the newly accessible Waianae area. Dillingham's goal for OR&L was to extend the railway out to his other land holdings in Kahuku, to enable Kahuku Plantation to become a freight customer. As the rail line extended around Kaena Point in that direction, Dillingham saw opportunities at points along the way. In 1898, he began development of the Haleiwa Hotel, a planned destination resort on the north shore that he opened the following year. Although it was not a great success, it did add passengers to the line. Kahuku Plantation developed as the line was constructed towards it, milling its first crop in 1892. The OR&L line reached it in 1899, 71 miles from Honolulu.

The majority of OR&L Co. business and profit came from carrying freight. In addition to the Ewa Plantation, Waianae Sugar Company, and Kahuku Plantation, the OR&L Co. ferried sugar from Waialua and Honolulu Plantation Co. (Aiea). Additional cargo of all types was carried along the line, including rice corn, timber, sisal, guano and basalt.<sup>11</sup> Another major factor in OR&L Co.'s success was its extension of tracks up to Wahiawa, where it carried pineapple from Dole Plantation (and others) to the Iwilei docks for canning.

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<sup>9</sup> Christine Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawaii* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press) 2010. p. 225.

<sup>10</sup> Christine Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawaii* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press) 2010. p. 225.

<sup>11</sup> Jim Chiddix and MacKinnon Simpson, *Next Stop Honolulu! The Story of the Oahu Railway & Land Company 1889-1971* (Honolulu, HI: Sugar Cane Press) 2004. p. 159.

In 1904 Dillingham's health failed, and his son Walter Dillingham took over as the company's chief financial officer. Benjamin Dillingham, however, remained on as president until his death in 1918.

The OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building was constructed in 1914, at a time when the company was prospering after overcoming early challenges. It represents a high point in the company's history. When it was built, the company was hauling sugar from most of the island's sugar mills, pineapple from the Wahiawa area plantations, passengers to and from Honolulu, and military personnel and material from both Pearl Harbor Naval base and what was then the recently constructed Schofield Barracks, near Wahiawa.

By this time, OR&L Co. was managed by both of Dillingham's sons, Walter and Harold, along with George Denison, as general manager. *Paradise of the Pacific* reported in 1924 that, "under their guidance...the railroad has gone steadily ahead, increasing its equipment, keeping ahead of the demands [made] upon it by fast growing industry."<sup>12</sup> OR&L Co. railroad operations remained a principal mode of travel and transportation across Oahu through the 1930s.

In 1924-25, a new passenger terminal and company headquarters building was constructed in Iwilei to replace the 1889 station. Guy Nelson Rothwell<sup>13</sup> is credited for the design of the new OR&L Co. Depot.<sup>14</sup> However, the OR&L Co. made changes to his design throughout the construction. This allowed the company greater flexibility during the process, which entailed concurrent demolition of the old station building and construction of the new one, without interrupting everyday operations.<sup>15</sup>

The new terminal was built by OR&L Co.'s sister company, Hawaiian Contracting Company,<sup>16</sup> which was formed by Walter F. Dillingham and associates in 1918 to support OR&L Co.'s building projects. Hawaiian Contracting Co. grew into a successful contracting firm that was responsible for the construction of many bridges throughout the Hawaiian Islands.<sup>17</sup> The use of Dillingham's own contracting company was explained by OR&L Co. General Manager George Denison:

It would have been an injustice to any contractor to ask him to tackle the job under the circumstances, so we did the work with our own crew, making plans as we went along – mostly. We had a pretty definite idea of what we wanted, but the circumstances under which we had to go about getting it made a complete plan before work began almost out of the question. As long as the work was all in the family there was forbearance also. We put up with the mess

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<sup>12</sup> "Take a Trip Over the Oahu Railway and You Will Not Wonder That Its Story is a Romance," *Paradise of the Pacific*, December 1924, Vol. 37. p. 117.

<sup>13</sup> Guy N. Rothwell biography included under Criterion C discussion.

<sup>14</sup> "Proposed OR&L Co. Station," *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, October 18, 1924. p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> "'Metamorphosis' Cruel Word But it Tells Story – New O.R.&L. Depot Goes Up Where Old Station Stood Without Trouble," *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, May 23, 1925. p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> "Camera Glimpses of Life in Hawaii," *Honolulu Advertiser*, December 7, 1924. (Magazine Section) p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Dee Ruzicka, *Queen Street Bridge (Nuuanu Stream) Pre-Draft National Register Nomination Form* (Prepared for Parsons Brinckerhoff) August 2012.

made by the workmen and they stood for our getting in their way and asking them to rip something out and make it over to fit a new idea that some one of us had just thought of. But we're comfortably housed now, and enjoy our accommodations with more individual relish, perhaps, because each one of us had a hand in the plans."<sup>18</sup>

In May 1925, Honolulu newspapers announced that the new OR&L Depot was finished. Originally estimated to cost \$75,000, approximately \$100,000 had been spent upon completion, with an additional \$25,000 allocated for an extension.<sup>19</sup> A *Honolulu Advertiser* article noted that the new terminal "is a colorful bit of old Spain, or a dip into the missions of California, so far as the style of architecture is concerned," and that, "just like any big town station, the iron gates clang in and out upon the arrival or departure of trains."<sup>20</sup>

Once complete, the OR&L Depot included a spacious waiting room, a ticket office in the center (with four windows), a "thoroughly modern baggage and express receiving and delivery department,"<sup>21</sup> an information booth, public telephones, news stand, soda fountain, and a lunch stand. The second floor contained offices for OR&L Co.'s President, Walter F. Dillingham; treasurer Harold G. Dillingham; General Manager George P. Denison; Assistant General Freight and Passenger Agent, G.A. Cull; Superintendent Harry N. Denison; Assistant Superintendent G.H. Rabb; and Secretary Mrs. Scott; as well as offices for the accounting department and dispatchers. The building also included refrigerated water piped throughout the building for drinking fountains.<sup>22</sup>

During the 1930s, passenger traffic decreased, but pineapple and sugar freight consistently provided steady income for the OR&L Co. Passenger trains ran less frequently, due to the increase in the private ownership of automobiles, as well as Territorial roadway improvements. Some passenger service was maintained, although previously busy railway stations became "whistle stops," and many passenger cars were converted to freight. Special charters, such as photography excursions around Kaena Point, were promoted. However with declining ridership and regular passenger service cuts during the 1930s, a fleet of gasoline-powered motorcars with daily service was initiated on the mainline. These were cheaper to operate than steam locomotives. In addition, the company added truck transport in an attempt to adapt to the changing times.

Although OR&L suffered somewhat in the 1930s from reduced ridership, the company maintained a significant presence in Iwilei and the Honolulu Harbor area. A 1941 map shows that OR&L's land holdings in the area stretched from King Street north to Dillingham Boulevard, west to Kuwili Street, and south along Queen Street and Prison Road to Piers 18-21. The core of operations was within the block bordered by King Street, Dillingham Boulevard, Iwilei Road and Kuwili

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<sup>18</sup> "'Metamorphosis' Cruel Word But it Tells Story – New O.R.&L. Depot Goes Up Where Old Station Stood Without Trouble," *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, May 23, 1925. p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> "New O.R. &L. Station, Just Opened to Public, is Thing of Beauty and Utility." *Honolulu Advertiser*. May 14, 1925. p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> "'Metamorphosis' Cruel Word But it Tells Story – New O.R.&L. Depot Goes Up Where Old Station Stood Without Trouble," *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, May 23, 1925. p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> "'Metamorphosis' Cruel Word But it Tells Story – New O.R.&L. Depot Goes Up Where Old Station Stood Without Trouble," *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, May 23, 1925. p. 11.

Street. This area included the OR&L Depot (see HABS HI-###), OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building (see HABS HI-###), and the rail yard with its service structures; several freight buildings; stalls in which trucks, trailers and buses were parked; a shed for passenger coaches, a blacksmith and car shop, and a roundhouse with fifteen tracks, a turntable and attached machine shop.

World War II reversed the decline in passenger traffic, and added to the company's freight traffic as well. The company was described as having

[gone] into a heightened schedule of moving men and material. Trains ran 24 hours a day, sometimes with five-minute headways. Many old passenger cars which – in the late '30s – had had the seats ripped out...were soon reconfigured with crude benches to carry people again.<sup>23</sup>

The wartime increase in ridership and freight put heavy requirements on the infrastructure and rolling stock. Wartime schedules meant that there was little time to do maintenance work on the rails or cars, and further, wartime shortages meant that there was little material with which to do any work, even if time had allowed.

After the war, in late 1945, OR&L Co.'s freight and passenger business collapsed. Revenues decreased due to the sudden loss of military traffic, both in terms of cargo (down by one-third) and passengers (down to slightly above pre-war levels).<sup>24</sup> Automobiles and trucks began to supply more and more of Oahu's transportation needs. Repairs to the rail line and equipment that were postponed during the war were badly needed. Lastly, a tsunami struck Hawaii on April 1, 1946, damaging OR&L Co.'s mainline, especially between Waianae and Kahuku.<sup>25</sup> This forced plantations on the north shore to use trucks, rather than the railroad, to transport sugar into Honolulu. When these and other plantations realized that truck conveyance was as efficient and cost-effective as transport by rail, it became the preferred method of delivery.

These developments led to OR&L Co.'s decision to close rail operations for Oahu outside of Honolulu, and their last train ran on December 31, 1947. Most of the mainline track was removed afterward. For a few decades longer, the Navy assumed control of the OR&L Co. tracks between Pearl Harbor and Naval Magazine Lualualei. The OR&L Co. maintained a small rail line at the Honolulu waterfront that served pineapple canneries, a meat packing plant, and the wharfs. The OR&L Depot and yard area was used for buses, and as a display area, showing the railway's historic engines, until about 1953. In 1958, the original roundhouse was razed, and the tracks were realigned to make the rail yard into a container yard to accommodate movement of containerized cargo via rail between ships and trucks. The meat packing plant that had been using rail transportation switched to trucks in 1962, and nearly nine miles of track were

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<sup>23</sup> Jim Chiddix and MacKinnon Simpson, *Next Stop Honolulu! The Story of the Oahu Railway & Land Company 1889-1971* (Honolulu, HI: Sugar Cane Press) 2004. p. 199.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Oahu Railway & Land Annual Report 1946, quoted in Jim Chiddix and MacKinnon Simpson's *Next Stop Honolulu! The Story of the Oahu Railway & Land Company 1889-1971* (Honolulu, HI: Sugar Cane Press) 2004. p. 347.

abandoned. The Iwilei pineapple canneries remained connected to the wharfs by rail lines until 1971, when OR&L Co. operations ended.<sup>26</sup>

By the early 1950s, the Territory of Hawaii sought to take possession of OR&L Co.'s eleven and one-half acres of Iwilei land, including the Depot and Land Department Office and Document Storage Building sites. This property was originally acquired by Dillingham through a royal patent, which required OR&L to use the land for railroad purposes. In 1952, the Territory made the argument that, as the land was no longer being used for the railway, ownership of the property should revert to the Territory as successor government to the crown. This matter remained unresolved until after Hawaii statehood in August of 1959, when the State of Hawaii brought the matter to court. In 1961 a settlement was reached, splitting the property between OR&L Co. and the state, with the latter taking possession of five and one-half acres, including the Depot and Land Department Office and Document Storage Building. OR&L Co. kept the remaining six-acre portion, the inland/northwest section of the property.<sup>27</sup>

Some remaining tracks near the Depot were removed in 1961. In that year OR&L Co.'s stockholders agreed to a merger with their subsidiary, Hawaiian Dredging and Construction Company, under the moniker of the Oahu Railway & Terminal Warehousing Co.

Hawaiian Dredging and Construction Co. was founded in 1902 by Walter Dillingham, as an accessory to the railroad business, in order to build wharf infrastructure that OR&L would then be able to serve. It was responsible for dredging Honolulu Harbor, the entrance to Pearl Harbor, and the Ala Wai Canal. In addition, Hawaiian Dredging had construction capabilities, and was responsible for the construction of Honolulu's main post office on Richards Street, the Honolulu Museum of Art, and much of Pearl Harbor's dry dock and maintenance facilities. After World War II, Hawaiian Dredging merged with another of Walter Dillingham's companies, Hawaiian Contracting Company, Limited (Formed in 1918), to become Hawaiian Dredging Construction Ltd. This company built many of the Territory's roads and bridges, and was also responsible for the initial 1959 construction of Ala Moana Center, Hawaii's largest shopping center. In the following decades, the company diversified, working in hotel and resort construction, completing the Four Seasons Wailea, the Hawaii Prince, the Fairmont Orchid, and the Manele Bay Hotels. In 2002, Hawaiian Dredging Construction Company, Inc. celebrated a century in business. In 2005, it completed construction of the John A. Burns School of Medicine for the University of Hawaii, and has continued to work on prominent projects such as Disney's Aulani Resort, on residential developments, as well as continuing its initial focus on infrastructure like roads and bridges.

In 1992, the State agreed to lease part of its five-and-one-half acre (former OR&L) parcel to the Liliha Civic Center for the construction of a twelve-story office building to house state agencies and non-profits, with priority given to those state agencies which served the Liliha-Kalihi area. The plan retained the

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<sup>26</sup> Jim Chiddix and MacKinnon Simpson, *Next Stop Honolulu! The Story of the Oahu Railway & Land Company 1889-1971* (Honolulu, HI: Sugar Cane Press) 2004. p. 260.

<sup>27</sup> "State, OR&L Reach Land Suit Accord," *The Honolulu Advertiser*, September 9, 1961. Pp. A-1:7 & A-4:4.



Depot and originally called for demolition of a warehouse and the Land Department Office and Document Storage Building. Though the warehouse was razed prior to 2000, the OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building was never taken down and still provides offices for Kalihi-Palama Culture & Arts Inc. The construction of the twelve-story office building never materialized, and in 2001, the State agreed to a revised plan. The new plan leased approximately 1.825 acres to the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation for construction of an affordable senior rental apartment building. The lease period commenced in 2007, and the building was completed in 2014.

The State has retained ownership of the five-and-one-half acres of former OR&L land it received in the 1961 settlement, although some of it is leased out. Various State offices and private tenants use or lease space in the OR&L Depot and Land Department Office and Document Storage Building. The State property also includes the former filling station and parking areas.

## **Part II. Architectural Information**

### **A. Neighborhood Changes**

The OR&L Terminal consists of 3.67 acres of land owned by the State at the corner of King and Iwilei Streets. The size of the parcel that Benjamin Franklin Dillingham received the right to lease and use in this location was originally 11.5 acres. In a 1961 agreement, the State of Hawaii took possession of the southeastern 5.5 acres, leaving OR&L with 6 acres upon which to continue to conduct freight and passenger business. The 5.5 acre portion was again divided in 2007, with 1.825 acres set aside for the use of the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation for affordable senior housing. Thus, this approximately 3.67 acre portion remaining today is what is included in the discussion below.

The OR&L Terminal parcel is situated directly opposite A'ala Park, just south of Kalihi-Palama and just north of Chinatown. When OR&L Co. operations were at their height in the second and third decades of the twentieth century, the area around the OR&L Terminal was bustling, with the surrounding streets lined with shops and residences. Neighborhood residents benefitted from access to easy transportation, and shop owners' benefitted from the steady influx of customers from outlying communities. "It was customary for plantation workers from outlying areas of Oahu to ride the OR&L lines into Honolulu to do their shopping on Saturdays. Disembarking the railcars at the OR&L Terminal in Iwilei, it was a short walk across Nuuanu Stream to Chinatown."<sup>28</sup> During the active OR&L Co. years, the A'ala neighborhood, Chinatown and downtown were shopping destinations for groceries, clothing or everyday items, in addition to souvenirs for military personnel. These neighborhoods were also recreation destinations, with movie theaters and restaurants for dates or family outings. The OR&L Co. Terminal was also a point where people transferred to streetcars for travel to destinations farther east, or take a train to the country for the day.

These neighborhoods have significantly changed since Benjamin Dillingham began developing the railroad. For the first four decades of the OR&L Depot's existence, the

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<sup>28</sup> Dee Ruzicka. Queen Street Bridge (Nuuanu Stream) HAER No. HI- XXX. 2016

A'ala neighborhood was filled with shops and residences, and A'ala Street itself began almost directly in front of the building.

Aala was a natural meeting place. Honolulu Harbor was the port of entry for all immigrants. Aala was also the gateway from Honolulu to Pearl Harbor and points *Ewa*. The OR&L (Oahu Railway and Land) train depot was located on King Street, just across Iwilei, so Aala was the first thing people from the rural areas saw when they came to town on the train, and the last stop for late shopping before going home. The Dillingham-Liliha-King intersection was the primary route for vehicular traffic and the HRT (Honolulu Rapid Transit) streetcars and buses passed right there on King Street, and this was great for business...Minority groups tend to locate in ethnic enclaves just outside of areas occupied by the dominant mainstream where they often are not welcomed, and Aala was a perfect low-rent area...So in the 1920s and 30s this place was alive and jumping, flourishing and exciting. The timing was right and Aala became the place to congregate, shop, share cultural values, exchange ideas and feel very comfortable in the process. Aala Rengo was the shopping center with the best and the most for the Japanese and the salespeople treated their customers with class, just like in the old country. The Aala Market had all the fresh produce one could wish for, as well as treats for the kids.<sup>29</sup>

During the mid-twentieth century era of urban renewal, A'ala was considered a blighted neighborhood, and its neighborhoods were slated for redevelopment. The entire area between King Street and Punchbowl, including the businesses, homes, benevolent society buildings, temples and theaters, was ultimately demolished and cleared for redevelopment. The portion between King and Beretania Streets, as well as the portion *makai* of King Street where A'ala Market and A'ala Rengo were located, was simply razed; A'ala Street was removed the property landscaped and added to the adjacent A'ala Park. The rest of the area was dedicated to housing. The same happened in Kalihi-Palama, north of Liliha Street, an area just north of the property, where housing that the government considered substandard was razed, and Mayor Wright Housing was constructed.

The property itself, as it existed at OR&L's busiest during World War II, has changed significantly with the loss of all of the railroad's tracks, as well as office and maintenance buildings, including the distinctive 1909 concrete roundhouse that was demolished in 1958. The current property has also seen some significant changes, most drastically, the loss of the train trackage and sheltered boarding platforms that were adjacent to the Depot.

By the time OR&L ceded its property to the State of Hawaii, the surrounding area was no longer a thriving community as it had historically been. The character of the area today is inhospitable, with several homeless shelters nearby, numerous people making A'ala park their home, few businesses in the immediate vicinity, along with a new senior housing high-rise building.

## **B. Site**

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<sup>29</sup> Michael M. Okihiro and Friends of A'ala. *a'ala: the story of a japanese community in hawaii*, 2003.

The OR&L Co. Terminal parcel is fenced on all sides. A decorative painted iron fence borders the parcel along King and Iwilei Streets, and a chain link fence borders it on the north and west sides of the property. The OR&L Depot is sited close to the corner of Iwilei and King Streets, with both the OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building and the former Filling Station near the northern edge of the property. The former Filling Station is located parallel with and closest to King Street. The OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building is just south and west of the former Filling Station. A chain link fence separates the former Filling Station from the rest of the property, and restricts access to the rear of the OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building. An additional section of the property, to the west of the OR&L Co. buildings and east of the section used by the senior housing development, is fenced off with chain link, and is not presently used aside from occasional parking. A large portion of the area surrounding the OR&L Terminal and Land Office and Document Storage Buildings is used for visitor and employee parking.

There are several landscaped areas on the property. The smallest of these is in front of the OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building, where there are two small plots separated from the asphalt parking area by rough-cut coral block curbs. These are located on either side of the building's central entry stairs, and are planted with plumeria (*Plumeria rubra*) trees. At the eastern (King Street) side of the parking area, closest to the iron fence is a concrete curbed, D-shaped grassy area, which includes a small banyan (*Ficus microcarpa*) tree. There is also a sod strip along the eastern side of the OR&L Depot, abutting the parking area. This strip includes small trees of undetermined species. Another grass area flanks the paths to the entrance of the OR&L Depot, both from the parking area, and from King Street. The largest landscaped area on the property is at its southern corner, where King and Iwilei Streets meet. This abuts the terminal's porte-cochere, and is landscaped with grass, coconut palms (*Cocos nucifera*) and small shrubs including money tree (*Dracaena marginata*).

### **C. Buildings and outbuildings**

The extant OR&L Co. buildings represent a range of styles and eras from OR&L's development.

The earliest is the OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building, which was constructed in 1914. It is a Classical Revival Style building, with strong Greek Revival elements. It is a square, two story concrete building with a front-facing gable roof with a large pediment. Its footprint is approximately 38' x 38'. The front of the building is laid out symmetrically, with a centered front door and porch. The front door is surmounted by a pediment, and flanked by pilasters.

The majority of the building's original windows have been replaced with jalousies, although the concrete window frames and sills have not been altered, and the smaller original windows have been retained. Metal awnings have been added to most of the windows on the second floor. From the outside, the building appears much the same as it did in a photograph taken during World War I. The main discernible differences are; the addition of the awnings; the loss of what appear to be kiawe (*Prosopis pallida*) trees behind the building, and the construction of the adjacent Filling Station.

The interior of the first floor appears largely intact, and retains original doors and hardware. Its plan is simple, with a central staircase, vestibule, and three adjoining rooms. The second floor has only two small rooms; a bathroom, which has a historic, five-panel wood door, and a small closet. Otherwise, the second floor is open with the

exception of partial height partitions. The ceiling has exposed concrete beams that follow the roofline. Few alterations are apparent in the building's interior. The most significant are; the filled balustrade in the concrete stair above the first floor; the addition of tile to the second-story floor; and the addition of modern light fixtures at both levels. This building is in good condition with little evidence of deterioration.

Behind the OR&L Land Department Office and Document Storage Building is its associated vault, constructed between 1919 and 1927. It is a one-story concrete building, rectangular in plan, with an approximately 8' x 10' footprint. It has a wide door opening that is currently boarded up, and small window vents along its north and south sides. The exterior walls are roughly finished, and retain their horizontal board-form impressions. The interior of this building is inaccessible. Overall, the vault appears to be in good condition.

The OR&L Depot was constructed in 1925, and is the most altered of the three buildings on the property. The building has a reversed L-shape plan, and is a two-story concrete and stucco building with a hipped tile roof, crenelated clock tower, and outset arcade. The hipped roof is supported by wood trusses. The outset arcade has a flat roof with a parapet, regular arched openings, a herringbone patterned brick walkway, and false beams frame the ceiling.

The building's windows are a mix of double-hung, likely historic units, and steel casement windows, some with arched transoms above. Most of the double-hung windows occur on the second floor, while most of the steel casement windows are on the first.

The building has been substantially renovated, though many of the historic exterior elements have been retained. At the north portion of the building, the open arcade has been enclosed, its open arches filled with windows (possibly moved from the original exterior walls of the arcade's inner wall).

The OR&L Depot's rear arched openings (some of which were originally gated access points to the train platforms), have been filled in with a mix of stuccoed concrete, modern doors, and historic and modern windows. At most locations which have been filled, the material is both inset into the arch, and painted a contrasting color to differentiate it from the surrounding walls. There is one location where this is not the case. This is at the building's extreme southwest corner, where an arch has been sealed, but not differentiated from the surrounding wall in any way. It is possible that this is a historic alteration, as a doorway at this location does not appear in the 1975 drawings.

Two other major changes to the OR&L Depot are the addition of an elevator on the building's west side, near the original main staircase, and the addition of an external staircase at the building's northwest corner. Both the elevator and the staircase were added outside of the building's original envelope, and create small rectangular projections from the L-shape of the footprint. Neither are visible from the primary, King Street-side of the building.

The interior has been heavily modified, with many interior walls re-located or removed; wall openings filled in; acoustic, dropped ceilings installed; and historic floor finishes replaced with carpet. Only a few areas on the interior appear to retain historic material; the main entry, staircase and vestibule all appear to have historic flooring, and the second floor lobby retains historic false beams on the ceiling. The clock tower retains

the historic clock mechanism and machinery, but the clock no longer functions. Despite the changes, this building is in very good condition overall, with minimal deterioration.

A fourth building on the property is the former Filling Station that was constructed in 1940. It is a one-story concrete building with a flat roof and parapet. The building is rectilinear in plan. It appears to have been a box-type gas station, and has two portions, each rectangular in plan, and each differing in overall height. The northern portion is both taller and wider than the southern. All of the openings to the building are boarded over, but it appears that the narrower southern part of the building had large, possibly steel multi-light windows typical of filling stations of the era, and a single door, all located on the east, King Street-side. There is also what appears to be a small vehicular door on the west side of this portion of the building. The larger, northern portion has what appears to be a single, vehicular doorway centered on this part of the building. Along its north wall are two smaller windows and two single doors, and a large boarded-up section. The west wall of this portion has an additional single door, and two small, vent-type windows. The Filling Station does not appear to have had significant modifications, although a historic photograph from the 1960s shows a sheltering canopy over the former location of the fuel pumps. The canopy no longer exists, though the where the fuel pumps were located is still extant. The roof at both portions of the building has collapsed, and the interiors were not accessible. This building is in poor condition due to the roof collapse.

An additional structure on the property is the air conditioning unit for the OR&L Depot. It is located just west of the northwest corner of the building, and is not visible from the main King Street side of the property. This fenced equipment occupies the footprint of approximately two parking spaces, and is located directly atop the former rail alignment.

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**A. Architectural drawings:**

No original drawings were found for this property. One early rendering was published in  
*Paradise of the Pacific*. December 1924, Vol. 37. p. 117.

Photographs of State of Hawaii Department of Accounting and General Services  
alteration drawings, along with tracings of the same with annotations of the location of  
historic rooms and functions are held by the Hawaiian Railway Society at 91-1001  
Renton Rd Ewa Beach, HI 96706-3402.

**B. Early Views:**

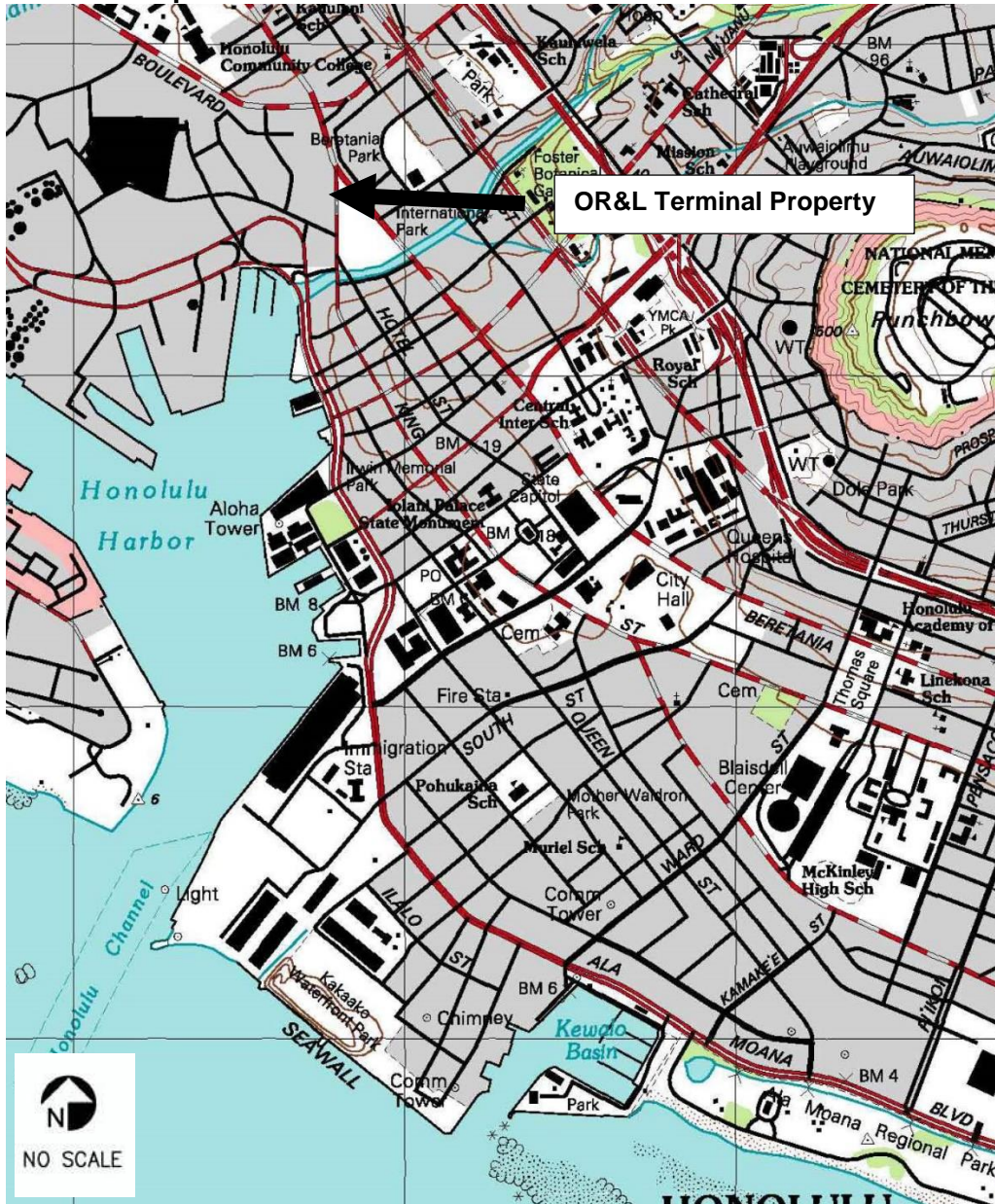
Early views are held at the Hawaii State Archives, in folder PP88-2.003, Railroads –  
Oahu Railway Station W.W. I, as well as Bannick Album No. 3.

**E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:**

Hawaiian Dredging Construction Co may hold information relating to the fill of the  
original fish pond on the property, or other information related to the construction of the  
buildings.

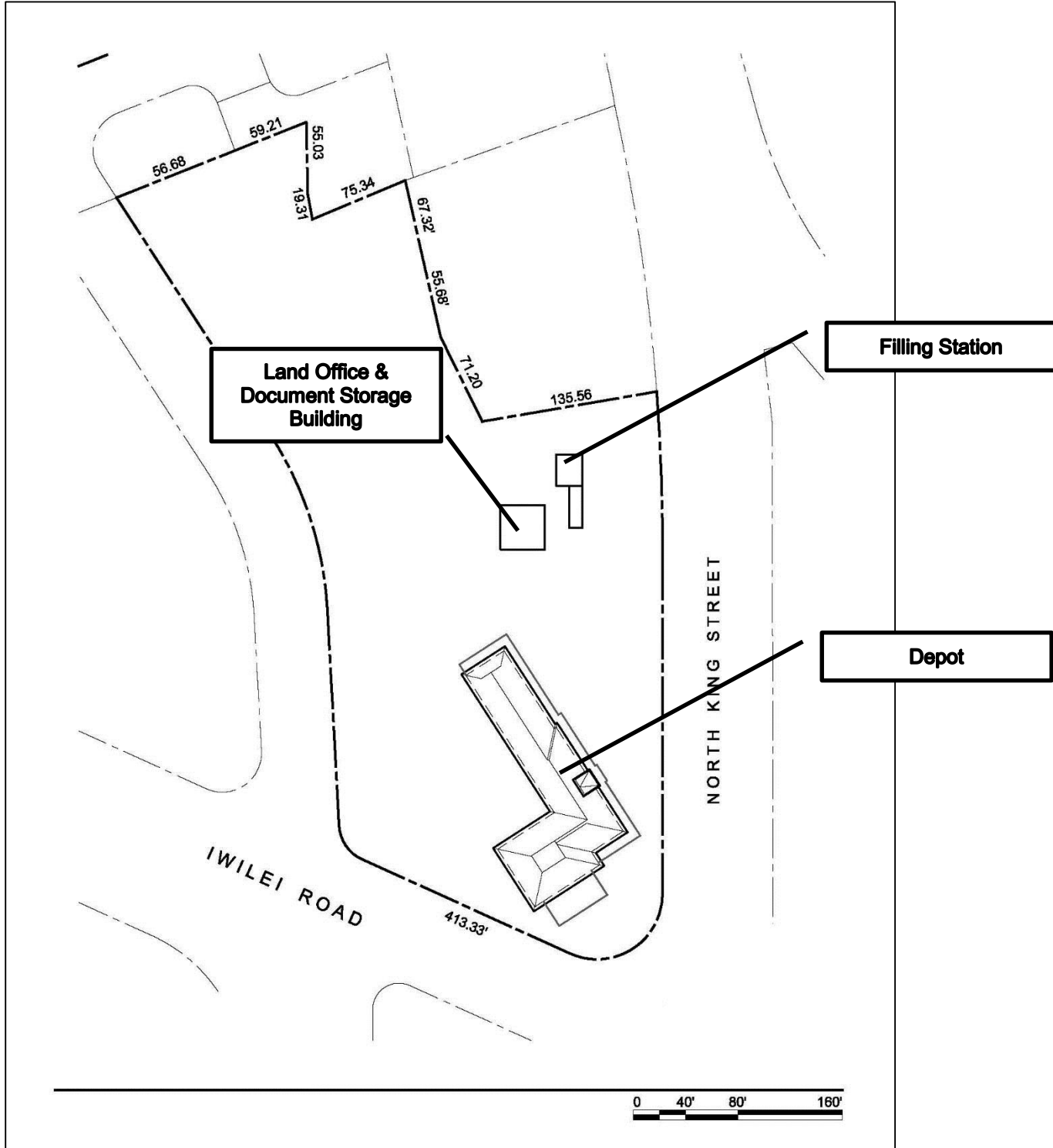


Location Map





Site Plan



**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SEE INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS FOR CAPTIONS**

**HABS No. HI-573-1**



**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SEE INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS FOR CAPTIONS**

**HABS No. HI-573-2**



**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SEE INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS FOR CAPTIONS**

**HABS No. HI-573-3**



**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SEE INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS FOR CAPTIONS**

**HABS No. HI-573-4**



HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SEE INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS FOR CAPTIONS

HABS No. HI-573-5



**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SEE INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS FOR CAPTIONS**

**HABS No. HI-573-6**



**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
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**HABS No. HI-573-7**





**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
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**HABS No. HI-573-8**



**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
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**HABS No. HI-573-9**



**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
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**HABS No. HI-573-10**



**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
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**HABS No. HI-573-11**



**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SEE INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS FOR CAPTIONS**

**HABS No. HI-573-12**



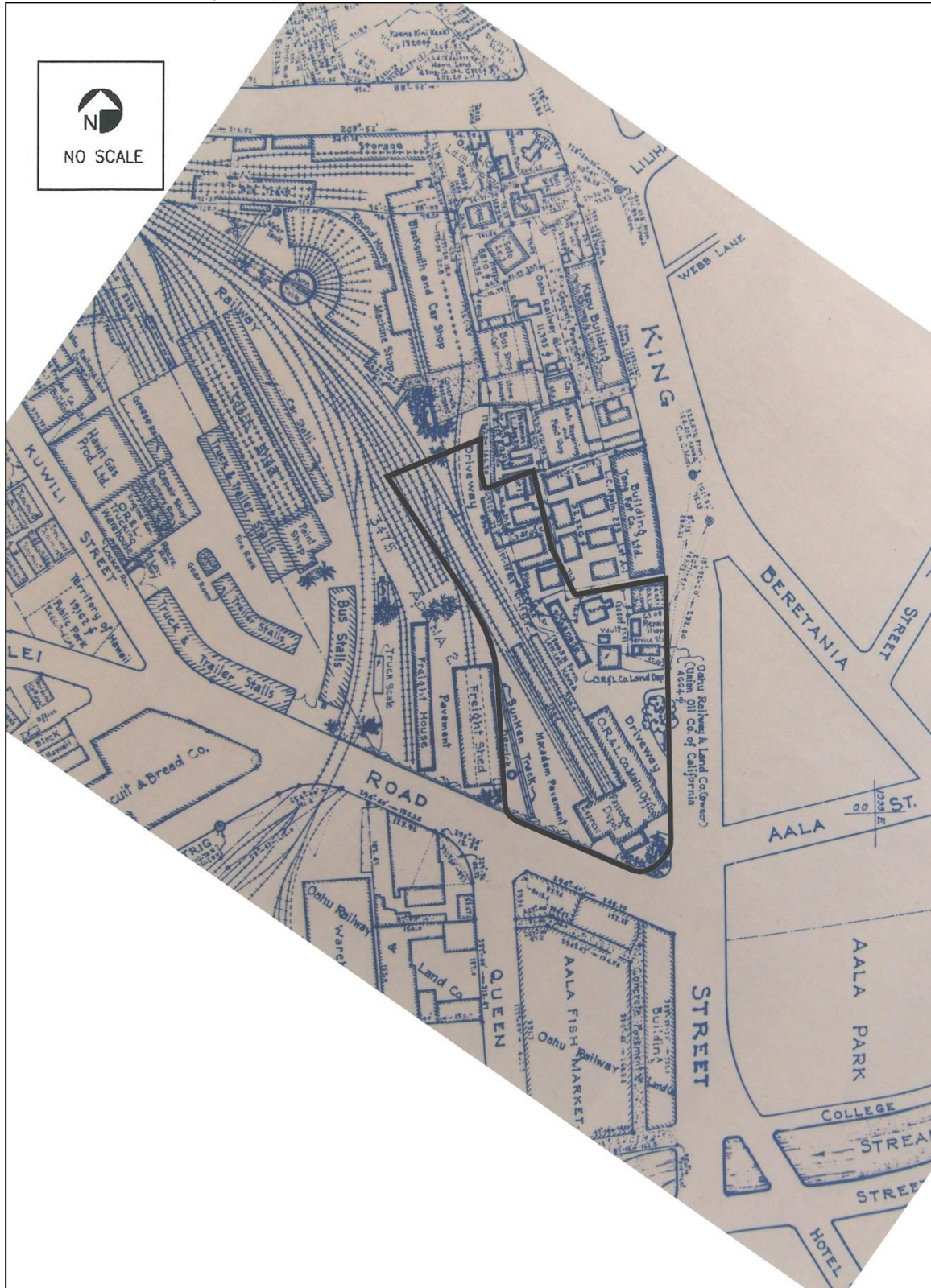
## **FIELD NOTES**

**OAHU RAILWAY AND LAND CO. HONOLULU TERMINAL, HABS NO. HI-573**  
**Honolulu, HI**



[illegible]

1941 map (portion) showing OR&L property at its most developed (current property boundaries added by MAI).





1963 Sanborn Map showing loss of structures, and change of ownership at OR&L property (current property boundaries added by MAI).

